



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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JUN 23 2003

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter of May 22 to the President urging him to take up specific issues with the Presidents of Poland and Russia. The White House has asked the Department of State to respond.

As a matter of policy, we are working very hard to secure restitution and/or compensation for property taken under the former Communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe, as a result of Nazi oppression or for other discriminatory reasons. The Department's goal is to promote fair, prompt and non-discriminatory resolution of these long-delayed claims. We have repeatedly urged the Polish government to ensure its restitution law does not discriminate against American citizens, regardless of whether they continue to hold Polish citizenship or reside in Poland.

We appreciate your interest in this issue and wish to assure you that this Administration will continue to encourage the Polish government to adopt a restitution law and procedures that allow the expeditious resolution of property claims on a non-discriminatory basis.

In Russia, the issue of Chechnya is part of our agenda with the Russian Federation. We support Russia's territorial integrity and its right to defend itself against separatism and terrorism. We are very concerned by the presence of terrorist elements among the Chechen separatists. Nevertheless, we maintain the belief that the solution to this long and painful conflict is ultimately political, not military.

We hope that elections for a Presidency and legislature, as called for in the March 23 referendum and planned for later this year, will be carried out democratically. For this political process to take hold,

The Honorable

Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Co-Chair,

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.
United States Senate.

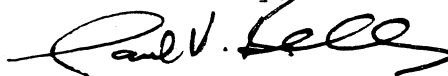
we agree that Russia must put a stop to atrocities by its troops against civilians in Chechnya and bring offenders to account. This has been our message to the Government of Russia, laid out by our Ambassador in continuing meetings with officials there, and with Russian officials visiting Washington.

Our diplomats in Embassy Moscow have also urged the Government of Russia on numerous occasions to guarantee that all returns of IDP's to Chechnya from camps in Ingushetia are voluntary, and that no IDP camps be closed by local authorities and/or Moscow. We note that after December of last year, we have not seen Russian authorities forcibly closing IDP camps, although there remain signs of pressure on IDPs to return to Chechnya.

Within the broader Russia-U.S. relationship, there are several common areas of concern and interest in Belarus. Russia has been a useful partner in helping resolve important issues. Political and economic reform would further both of our agendas.

Thank you for your expression of interest in these important matters of European security and human rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul V. Kelly", with a stylized, flowing script.

Paul V. Kelly
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs